

Show of Hands

Fairfax County Public Library Volunteer Newsletter



Summer 2005

The Art of Conversation

"You have to be brave," volunteer Nora Sinclitico tells the half-dozen or so adults who gather once a week to practice their English conversation skills at the Kingstowne Library in Alexandria. She is one of 11 volunteers who coordinate informal groups for those learning English to practice their conversational skills.

At the weekly gatherings, Sinclitico often brings in the morning paper to stimulate topics for conversations which might range from world affairs to the Michael Jackson trial. As a former docent at the Smithsonian, she was told, "Be sure they have fun." She brings that philosophy to her Practice Your English group.

Her students represent the globe – South Korea, Russia, Estonia, the Czech Republic and many other countries. "I'm learning more than they are," she says. "I'm just loving it!"

At the nearby John Marshall Library, volunteer Elly Miller brings in puzzles and crosswords for the participants in her group. When she began coordinating the English conversation group a little more than a year ago, she consulted a friend who was a professional ESL teacher at Northern Virginia Community College. She was encouraged not to correct grammar. "What you want is for individuals to feel comfortable," she explains. Weekly topics

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► Volunteer Nora Sinclitico with her multi-national class of English learners at the Kingstowne Library.

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Volunteer Coordinator
Kate Wanderer

Editor in Chief
Lois Kirkpatrick

Managing Editor
Pat Bangs

Design & Production
Lorrie Bennett
Mark Riddick

■ The Art of Conversation continued...

might include holidays, the November election, or child care. She encourages those who attend to exchange telephone numbers and e-mails. Recently, after a session ended, she noticed groups of her students talking together in the library branch parking lot and was pleased knowing their conversations were in English.

On the other side of the county, volunteer Carmen Friedmann wears two hats at the Reston Regional Library. Born in Puerto Rico, she is bilingual and has coordinated an English conversation group for three years, but just recently taught Spanish to Reston library staff. "I love the English language," she says of her motivation for coordinating the group. She often brings in light poetry for the group to read. Each group, she says, develops its own personality. Friedmann has noticed that women in certain cultures tend to talk "inside their mouths." She encourages them to open their mouths and even exaggerate sounds to improve pronunciation. Friedmann often gives her students homework from easy language newspapers. She asks them to choose an article and tell the class about it. The last half-hour, she encourages free discussion.

"It doesn't do for me to do all the talking," she tells the class.

The participants are grateful for the opportunity to practice their skills, all three volunteers believe. Often, they bring in small gifts and in one case, a woman returning to her native country came to class just to let Sinclitito know she wouldn't be around. Friedmann even continues to assist a core group of English-language learners who now meet outside the library branch.



▲ Practicing English at the John Marshall Library.

Realtors Volunteer at Dolley

Taking a break from the hectic real estate market, 26 employees from the McLean Long & Foster Realty office, located on Elm Street, donated more than 50 hours of service on June 7, 2005 at the Dolley Madison Library. As part of a company-wide Community Service Day, the volunteers put 370 shelves of non-fiction, fiction, biographies and picture books in order. Branch staff was thrilled. When the Summer Reading Program kicked off on June 24, eager readers of all ages could find what they wanted.

Long & Foster staff members Dorothy Friedlander, Florann Audia, Colleen Finks, Joan Begelman, Mary Jo Offringa and Dave Finley pose near the well-organized picture books stacks at the Dolley Madison Library. ►



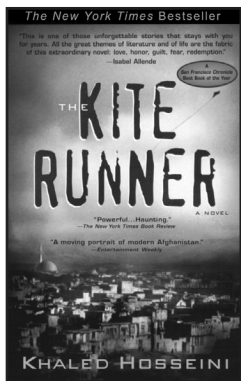
Major League Readers

Student volunteers at the Pohick Regional Library in Burke sign up youngsters for the annual Summer Reading Program, "Be a Major League Reader," co-sponsored by the Washington Nationals.



Teens interested in volunteering at the library and other organizations to fulfill class requirements, or just for fun, will be able to attend Teen Volunteer Fairs at four library branches in October. Check the October *This Month* for details.

All Fairfax Reads



You're invited to participate in All Fairfax Reads, a "one book, one community" project encouraging residents to read and discuss the same book between now and September 20. This year's selection is the bestselling novel *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

Set in Afghanistan and in America, the novel traces the friendship between an Afghan youth and a servant's son. The two boys are inseparable until a fateful kite-flying contest. The novel spans several decades in Afghanistan, through the end

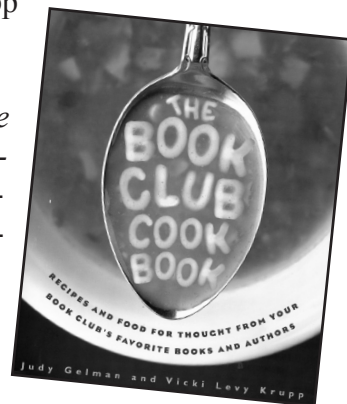
of the monarchy and the Soviet invasion to the rise of the Taliban, as well as the present-day immigrant community in the U.S.

A discussion guide that includes information about the author, Afghanistan, discussion questions and more is available on the library's Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov. All Fairfax Reads concludes with a live presentation and discussion with *The Kite Runner*'s author at 7:30 p.m. on September 20 in the Board Auditorium of the Fairfax County Government Center. Dr. Hosseini's book will be available for sale and signing at the program. Registration begins September 6; call 703-324-8414 or e-mail LibraryEvents@fairfaxcounty.gov to sign up. Limit of four tickets per registrant. Unclaimed reserved seats will be released at 7:20 p.m.

Fall for the Book

Tim O'Brien, Mark Winegardner and the authors of *The Book Club Cookbook* are among the featured writers at the 7th annual Fall for the Book Festival September 14-21. This free literary festival is cosponsored by the Fairfax County Public Library, and most events will be held on the Fairfax campus of George Mason University.

O'Brien is best known for his National Book Award-winning *Going After Cacciato* and his novel *The Things They Carried*, both based on his experiences as a combat infantryman in Vietnam. Winegardner, the author of *The Godfather Returns*, is a GMU graduate chosen from three dozen contenders to continue Mario Puzo's saga. Judy Gelman and Vicki Levy Krupp will share recipes and food for thought from *The Book Club Cookbook*; other festival highlights include Holocaust survivor Marion Blumenthal



Lazan, author of *Four Perfect Pebbles*; Alexandra Robbins, author of *Pledged: The Secret Life of Sororities*; Sharyn McCrumb, author of the bestselling *Ballad* books; and dozens of other writers. For more information, visit the library's Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library.

This free festival is cosponsored by the Fairfax County Public Library and George Mason University, the *Washington Post*, ABC 7 News, the City of Fairfax, ExxonMobil, Dominion Virginia Power and the Association of Writers and Writing Programs.

Volunteer Opportunities

Our volunteers are our best recruiters! Please help us advertise our opportunities by clipping this list and sharing it with friends, family, neighbors, coworkers, workplace volunteer programs, school, clubs or houses of worship – wherever someone may be able to help.

Volunteer Opportunities: Summer and Fall 2005

Many branches seek volunteers to:

- Adopt-a-Shelf (organize a section of library, flexible schedule). Ages 12 and up, or volunteer as a family.
- Help a children's department by preparing program materials or assisting the children's librarian at a program. Ages 14 and up.
- Learn the library's circulation system and check in books or locate items on reserve for customers. Adults.
- With MLS degree, provide support for the information department in providing reference service.

Branch opportunities starting this summer:

- Assist with clerical tasks (filing, photocopying, word processing, preparing mailings) at **Library Administration** (Fairfax County Government Center) during weekday daytime hours. Minimum age 16. Linda.Gifford@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-324-8324.
- Help process gift books at **Fairfax City Regional Library**. Add gift book copies to the library's database and cover hardback books. Training provided. Ideal qualifications: library experience and computer skills. Must be available for at least a year. Adults. Pam.Johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-293-6227.
- Locate reserved books for customers at **Kings Park Library**, Mondays or Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Work at the check out desk on Friday and Saturday afternoons. Adults. Commitment of at least a year. Sue.Lem@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-978-5600.
- Interested in teens and literacy? Have you taught middle or high school? Assist **Lorton Library** in providing programs for teens. Adults. Possible college internship opportunity. Denise.Morgan@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-339-7385.
- Master Gardener or volunteer with expertise and knowledge of native plants is needed to care for **Thomas Jefferson Library's** Butterfly and Bird Attracting Garden. Periodic weeding and pruning; ability to manage groups of volunteers for occasional large projects. Help with weekly watering and maintenance of indoor plants also desired. Helen.Critchfield@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-573-1060.
- ADOPT-A-PLOT Volunteer. Calling all gardeners! The **Woodrow Wilson Library** (Baileys Crossroads) is in need of volunteers who like to work outdoors and get their hands dirty. The volunteer will be responsible for weeding and mulching a section of the branch grounds. Qualifications: Ability to work independently. Knowledge of plants desirable, but not necessary. Seasonal commitment, approximately two hours a week to be scheduled at the volunteer's convenience during open hours. Jenny.Growney@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-820-8774.

Coming in September:

- Put your knowledge of MS Office, the Internet, and your training skills to good use at these branches:
- **Richard Byrd Library** (Springfield) seeks a volunteer to offer computer instruction. Jerry.Herrera@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-451-8055.
- **Dolley Madison Library** (McLean) would like to offer MS Office tutorials once a month. Carolyn.Heyer@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-356-0770.
- **George Mason Regional Library** (Annandale) seeks a volunteer to teach MS Office Suite. Nancy.Ehlke@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-256-3800.
- **Patrick Henry Library** (Vienna) would welcome three volunteers to teach Word/MS Office. Barbara.DeBeaufort@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-938-0405.
- Training is available for all positions. For information, contact Kate Wanderer at: Kate.Wanderer@fairfaxcounty.gov; 703-324-8332. To visit the volunteer section of the library's web site or apply online, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library and click on "Do You Know... You Can Volunteer at the Library?"